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Report of the Ethics Office 2010

Summary

Pursuant to Executive Board decision 2010/17: Reports of the Ethics Offices of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, paragraph 9, the Ethics Office of UNFPA submits the present report to the Executive Board at its annual session 2011. In accordance with the Secretary-General's bulletin on United Nations system-wide application of ethics: separately administered organs and programmes (ST/SGB/2007/11), the report has been reviewed by the United Nations Ethics Committee at its 27th session on 15 February 2011 and was subsequently provided to the UNFPA Executive Director.

The present report, while focusing on the activities undertaken by the Ethics Office during the period 1 January to 31 December 2010, also describes the progression of the ethics function in UNFPA since the establishment of the Ethics Office in 2008.

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to take note of the present report and comment on the progress of the work of the Ethics Office.

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I. Introduction

1. The UNFPA Ethics Office was established in January 2008 in response to the Secretary-General's bulletin titled United Nations system-wide application of ethics: separately administered organs and programmes (ST/SGB/2007/11). The Secretary-General's bulletin highlights the purpose of ensuring the consistent application of the highest standards of ethics and integrity within the United Nations including its separately administered funds and programmes and harmonizing the ethical standards and policies across the United Nations system, particularly between the United Nations Secretariat and the funds and programmes.

2. The ultimate goal and principle of the UNFPA Ethics Office is to cultivate and nurture a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability, and thereby enhance trust in, and the credibility of, the United Nations, both internally and externally, as called for in the Secretary-General's bulletin. The UNFPA Ethics Office assists the Executive Director in ensuring that all staff members observe and perform their functions consistent with the highest standards of integrity required by the Charter of the United Nations. Towards this end and in line with the UNFPA management results framework (MRF) that was prepared to support the achievement of the UNFPA strategic plan, 2008-2013, the activities of the Ethics Office are directly linked to MRF output 3 (UNFPA maintains motivated and capable staff), MRF output 5 (ensured leadership of UNFPA and active participation in the United Nations reform), and MRF output 6 (improved accountability for achieving results at all levels).

3. The present report, the third since the establishment of the UNFPA Ethics Office in January 2008, is being submitted to the UNFPA Executive Board at its annual session 2011, pursuant to decision 2010/17. Since this is the first time that the Ethics Office is presenting a report to the Executive Board, the present report, while focusing primarily on the activities undertaken by the Ethics Office during the period 1 January to 31 December 2010, also describes the progression of the ethics function in UNFPA since the establishment of the Ethics Office in 2008. This report was reviewed by the United Nations Ethics Committee (UNEC) at its 27th session on 15 February 2011 and was subsequently provided to the UNFPA Executive Director.

II. Background and general information

4. In accordance with the objectives of its establishment, the specific functions assigned to the UNFPA Ethics Office are as follows:

- Developing standards, training and education on ethics issues.

- Providing guidance to management to ensure that the rules, policies, procedures and practices of the organization reinforce and promote the highest standards of ethics

and integrity required by the Charter of the United Nations, other applicable staff rules and regulations, and the standards of conduct for the international civil service.

- Providing advice and guidance on ethics-related issues to UNFPA staff members at their request and in confidence.

- Administering the UNFPA financial disclosure and declaration of interest programme.

- Undertaking the responsibilities assigned to it under the UNFPA policy for the protection of staff against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations.

5. The UNFPA Ethics Office is staffed with an Ethics Adviser and an Ethics Associate. Like other ethics offices in the United Nations system, the UNFPA Ethics Office operates on principles of independence, impartiality and confidentiality, and the Ethics Adviser reports directly to the Executive Director.

6. In 2008, its first year of operations, the focus of the Ethics Office was on establishing the Office and completing two rounds of financial disclosure exercises in respect of the 2006 and 2007 calendar years. In 2009, the focus was on communication to increase staff awareness of the full mandate of the Ethics Office. Through a range of communication modalities, including training, distribution of brochures, and the launch of a dedicated website, the Ethics Office sought to enhance staff knowledge and education on ethical standards and expected ethical behaviour in the workplace and to secure staff "buy-in" for the ethics function. A mandatory online training course, titled "Ethics, Integrity and Anti-Fraud: Setting the Standard for UNFPA", was launched and a series of face-to-face ethics training sessions and briefings were provided to a cross-section of staff members based in the field and at headquarters.

7. In 2010, the Ethics Office maintained the momentum of its communication activities with a specific focus on securing the commitment of supervisors in partnering with the Ethics Office in promoting an ethical culture in UNFPA. The Ethics Office briefed the UNFPA Executive Committee on two occasions on the leadership role that was expected of the Executive Committee in ensuring ethical conduct at UNFPA and leading by example. A face-to-face training module on supervisory accountability for ethics was developed and included in the ethics training sessions that were conducted in conjunction with three regional planning meetings. These sessions focused on the obligations of supervisors to observe the highest standards of personal integrity and to establish work environments in which they and the staff whom they supervised could work together in teams with openness, trust and respect.

8. The advisory and guidance function of the Ethics Office continued to expand in 2010. The number of requests for advice and guidance increased from 35 in 2008, to 102 in 2009,

and to 144 in 2010 (see figure 2). Of the 144 requests for advice and guidance in 2010, 63 per cent related to a variety of conflict of interest situations. Providing staff with advice on how to manage actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest is one of the most important risk-prevention functions of the Ethics Office. It would appear that a key consequence of sustained ethics training and learning is the continuing expansion of the advisory and guidance function of the Ethics Office. At the same time, the types of requests for advice and guidance serve as a basis for designing new training initiatives, which in turn reinforce the preventive function of the Ethics Office.

9. The other critical risk-management function of the Ethics Office is ensuring compliance with the requirements of the financial disclosure programme. Active collaboration with UNFPA Representatives and heads of offices/units in the implementation of the 2010 financial disclosure exercise resulted in 100 per cent compliance being reached by the end of April 2010 by those staff members who were required to file disclosure statements in respect of the 2009 calendar year. UNFPA Representatives and heads of offices/units were engaged in identifying those staff members from their respective offices who were required to file disclosure statements in accordance with the financial disclosure policy and monitoring compliance with submission deadlines with regard to themselves and the staff members whom they supervised.

10. The work and functions of the UNFPA Ethics Office have been reviewed by the Joint Inspection Unit in the context of its report titled Ethics in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2010/3). UNFPA response to this report is included in the UNFPA report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit in 2010 (DP/FPA/2011/3 (Part II)).

III. Activities of the Ethics Office

A. Standard-setting and policy support

11. A key function of the UNFPA Ethics Office is to provide guidance to management in the development and adherence of ethical standards in organizational policies and procedures in order to ensure organizational accountability for both financial and human resources management. During 2009 and 2010, the Ethics Office worked closely with the Division for Human Resources (DHR), the Division for Oversight Services (DOS) and the Division for Management Services (DMS) in the review of policies and procedures which related to staff conduct and individual and organizational accountability. Two policies – the policy on "Outside Activities and/or Honours, Decorations, Favours, Gifts, Awards, Remuneration from Outside Parties" and the "Financial Disclosure and Declaration of Interest" policy – were updated by the Ethics Office in consultation with DHR, DOS and DMS.

12. The policy on "Outside Activities and/or Honours, Decorations, Favours, Gifts, Awards, Remuneration from Outside Parties" (which was issued prior to the establishment of the Ethics Office) was updated to reflect the advisory role of the Ethics Office in

providing guidance on potential conflicts of interest situations. Included in the updated policy is a form (adapted from UNDP) that has to be completed in relation to each request for prior authorization from the Director, DHR, for participation in an outside activity and/or receipt of an honour, decoration, favour, gift, award, remuneration from an outside party. The new procedures provide for the Ethics Office to vet for conflict of interest and to consult with any other substantive office, including the supervisor of the staff member, prior to approval by the Director, DHR. The introduction of the form has facilitated the receipt of comprehensive information on the type of request at the outset, enabling speedy review by the Ethics Office and minimizing the need to repeatedly revert to the requester for additional information and clarification, as was the case before. The updated policy was approved by the UNFPA Executive Committee in 2010.

13. The UNFPA policy on "Financial Disclosure and Declaration of Interest" was also updated by the Ethics Office and approved by the Executive Committee in 2010. The updated policy includes additional categories of staff who will be required to file statements and sets out a process (i.e., collaboration between the Ethics Office, DHR, heads of offices and UNFPA Representatives in preparing an annual database of staff members who are required to file disclosure statements for the previous calendar year) to facilitate compliance with the requirements of the policy. It should be noted that the refinement of the nature and scope of an organization's financial disclosure programme is an ongoing process. Throughout 2010, the United Nations Ethics Committee had extensive discussions on the experiences of its member organizations in implementing their respective financial disclosure programmes. Changes in organizational structure and functional responsibilities of staff as well as improved methodologies to identify, prevent and manage conflicts of interest will require regular review of the financial disclosure programme in order to ensure that it is a robust instrument for risk management.

14. The United Nations Ethics Office "protection intake" form which guides staff in providing relevant information to support their complaints of retaliation was adopted to assist staff members who wished to invoke the provisions of the UNFPA policy on "Protection against Retaliation for Reporting Misconduct or for Cooperating with an Authorized Fact-Finding Activity". The policy itself is being revised to reflect the incorporation of the key components of an effective protection policy as agreed to by the membership of UNEC during its 2010 review of the protection policies of its membership.

B. Training, education and outreach

15. The purpose of the training, education and outreach function is to reinforce the core values and principles of the United Nations, to encourage staff to assume individual and collective responsibility to adopt ethical practices and demonstrate ethical behaviour, and to increase knowledge of and compliance with UNFPA-specific ethics-related policies. In carrying out this function, the Ethics Office worked in close collaboration with all units at UNFPA. Collaboration with the Learning and Career Management Branch (LCMB), DHR, has ensured that ethics training is integrated into all learning initiatives and training events

managed by LCMB. Collaboration with the UNFPA regional offices has resulted in the inclusion of face-to-face ethics training in regional planning meetings and subregional cluster meetings.

Mandatory online training on "Ethics, Integrity and Anti-Fraud: Setting the Standard for UNFPA"

16. The online mandatory course on "Ethics, Integrity and Anti-Fraud: Setting the Standard for UNFPA" (English version) was launched by the Executive Director at the beginning of 2009. The Spanish and French versions of the course became available later in the year. The course was a joint initiative of the LCMB, DOS and the Ethics Office. Through scenarios, tests and quizzes, those taking the course are introduced to the Charter of the United Nations, the core values and principles of the United Nations, and the various ethics-related policies and procedures of UNFPA. By 2010 end, 1,288 staff members had taken this course. When the course was launched, heads of offices and UNFPA Representatives were instructed to include the course in their respective annual office workplans and monitor compliance of their staff. Beginning in 2011, the course will be included in the list of the mandatory courses in the UNFPA performance appraisal and development (PAD) system and supervisors will be expected to formally record compliance by their supervisees at their respective year-end reviews.

Introductory ethics training

17. In 2009, the Ethics Office designed an introductory face-to-face ethics training course that focused on increasing staff awareness of ethical standards and expected behaviours in accordance with the core values and principles of the United Nations and the Standards of conduct for the international civil service. Participants work on case studies that relate to a range of ethics-related situations that they could face in their daily work. The course also serves as a platform to explain the objectives and requirements of the financial disclosure policy and the application of the provisions of the protection against retaliation policy. The course was delivered in conjunction with the 2009 round of UNFPA regional planning meetings that were held in Johannesburg, Bangkok, Bratislava, Panama City and Cairo, respectively, and included in training events held in Jamaica (for staff in the Caribbean subregional office) and at headquarters. Approximately 420 field-based staff members, including UNFPA Representatives, Deputy Representatives, Assistant Representatives, Operations Managers, Technical Advisers and Junior Professional Officers, 130 headquarters-based staff members, and all members of the UNFPA Executive Committee attended this course in 2009. The course is now an integral part of all induction training programmes organized by the LCMB. In 2010, a total of 65 field staff members who attended the National Programme Officer/Junior Professional Officer Induction Training Course and training events hosted by the UNFPA regional offices in Bangkok and Cairo participated in the ethics training.

Supervisory accountability for ethics

18. In 2010, the Ethics Office developed a training module on supervisory accountability for ethics that focused on the responsibilities of supervisors to "walk the talk" in relation to ethical behaviour. The module identifies the various factors that have an impact on ethical behaviour in an organization, the role of supervisors in addressing these factors, and their obligation to ensure that they themselves and those whom they supervise apply the highest standards of integrity in their daily work. As in the case of the introductory training on ethics, the module on supervisory accountability for ethics also adopts a case-study approach to training, allowing participants to brainstorm among themselves on actions that they themselves or their supervisees should take when faced with any type of conflict of interest situation that could have an impact on their independence and impartiality. The training also draws attention to behaviours and working styles that could lead to perceptions of abuse of authority, discrimination and harassment, and reinforces the obligations of supervisors to demonstrate behaviours that are fair, non-discriminatory and non-retaliatory in relation to their staff. The use of case studies enables participants to surface the various ethics-related situations and ethical dilemmas that they face in their daily work and to discuss in the non-judgemental environment of an ethics training session, how they actually responded when faced with these situations/dilemmas, whether their responses were in accordance with the standards of conduct, and if not, why.

19. Approximately 225 staff members from the field, including UNFPA Representatives, Deputy Representatives, Assistant Representatives, and senior staff from regional and subregional offices attended one of the training sessions on supervisory accountability for ethics that were conducted in 2010 in conjunction with the regional planning meetings that were held in Bangkok, Johannesburg and Panama, respectively. It should be noted that almost all of those who attended one of these sessions had also participated in one of the introductory ethics training sessions that were conducted at the 2009 regional planning meetings. As such, their participation in one of the 2010 sessions served as refresher training on ethics. With specific reference to the UNFPA Representatives and Directors of regional/subregional offices who were present, it was also an opportunity to secure their commitment to set aside dedicated time for ethics learning and leading discussions on ethics in their respective duty stations.

Ethics information and briefing sessions

20. In line with the focus on the role and responsibilities of supervisors in ensuring an ethical environment in their respective offices, the Ethics Adviser briefed the Executive Committee on two occasions. At the Executive Committee meeting in January 2010, the Ethics Adviser briefed the Committee on the subject of "ethics and the tone at the top" and the ethical leadership role expected of senior management. The briefing also served to identify ways in which the Committee could support the work of the Ethics Office, particularly its training, education and outreach function. At the Executive Committee meeting in November 2010, the Ethics Adviser reinforced the leadership role of the

Committee in securing staff "buy-in" for ethical behaviour. The importance of leading by example and having continuous and direct engagement with staff to discuss ethics-related issues and concerns, and taking immediate and corrective action when required was emphasized.

21. As a consequence of the collaboration between the Ethics Office and the regional offices, all newly appointed UNFPA Representatives and Deputy Representatives who came to the UNFPA headquarters for briefings in 2010 also met with the Ethics Office. These individual meetings provided the opportunity for the Ethics Adviser to inform the new appointees of the functions of the Ethics Office, the mandatory online course on ethics that they were required to take, the objectives of the financial disclosure programme including compliance requirements and initial disclosure, and the various ethics-related policies that were in place.

22. The Ethics Office also participated in a panel discussion on accountability at the divisional staff retreat of the Information and External Relations Division held in December 2010. This was an opportunity to reinforce the role of ethics in promoting organizational accountability; describe the various types of conflict of interest situations that staff can face and how these should be managed; and discuss the norms and behaviours that contribute towards creating an ethical environment in the workplace. The Ethics Office will continue to work with other headquarters units in ensuring that ethics is periodically included as an agenda item in their staff meetings.

23. The Ethics Office is of the view that continuous ethics education throughout a staff member's career is critical for nurturing a culture of ethics within the organization. For this purpose, in addition to the range of formal ethics training and learning modalities such as mandatory online training, learning packages and structured workshops made available to staff at regular intervals, there should be frequent supervisor-led discussions on ethics. The ethics awareness being imparted by these modalities contributes to keeping staff and management motivated to maintain the highest standards of integrity in their day-to-day work. In 2010, a total of approximately 375 staff members attended either a training or briefing session on ethics conducted by the Ethics Office. Furthermore, based on feedback received by the Ethics Office, several UNFPA Representatives led ethics discussions and/or conducted ethics training for their respective staff in 2010 (see also paragraph 19 above).

Ethics Office website

24. The Ethics Office website continues to be a key communication tool to keep staff actively aware of ethics-related issues. The website provides easy access to all ethics-related guidelines; policies and procedures; the mandatory online course in ethics (English, French and Spanish versions); and ethics training presentations/materials. The website also includes quizzes and scenarios of various ethics-related situations that staff can be faced with in their daily work together with guidance on appropriate responses. To draw the

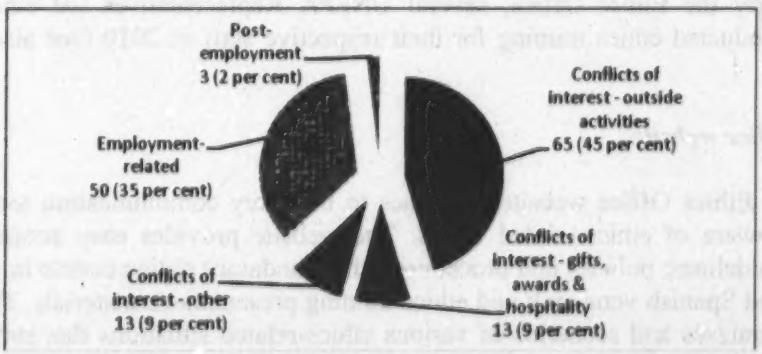
attention of staff to work on these scenarios, the home page of the website has a dedicated section on workplace conduct that is updated regularly and captioned "what is the right thing to do?" The outside activity and/or receipt of an honour, decoration, favour, gift, award, remuneration from an outside party request form and the protection against retaliation request form are also posted on the home page of the website. The website has served as a useful resource for UNFPA Representatives who have conducted ethics briefing sessions for their staff.

C. Advice and guidance

25. The Ethics Office has provided a secure environment for staff to seek advice and guidance in confidence. It has served as a resource in identifying ethical dilemmas and providing resolutions, identifying and managing actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest and providing clarification on expected behaviours in accordance with the values and principles of the United Nations. While the nature of the inquiry determines the time taken for the response, the average response time of the Ethics Office is 72 hours.

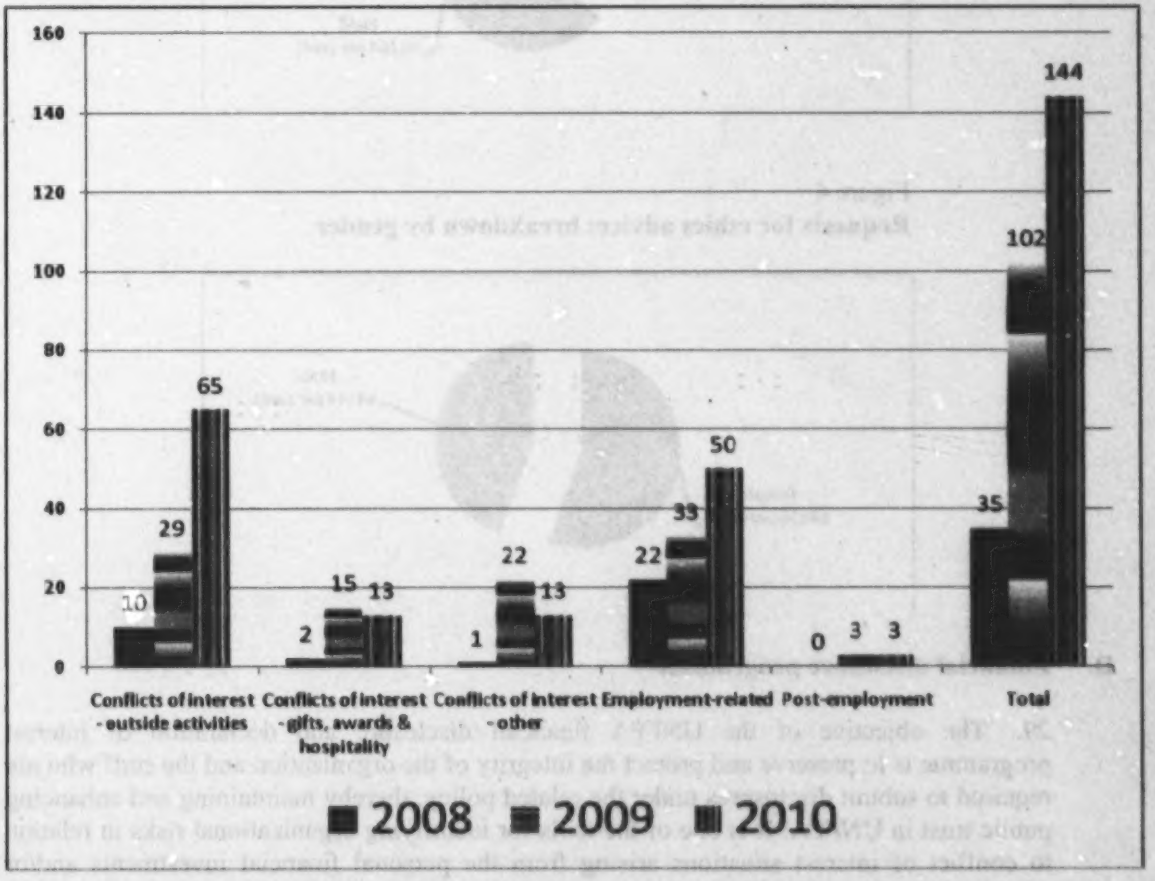
26. In 2010, the Ethics Office responded to 144 individual inquiries for advice and guidance on a range of ethics-related issues. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the types of ethics-related inquiries in 2010. Figure 2 provides a comparison between the volume and type of requests received in 2008, 2009 and 2010. As reflected in figure 1, out of a total of 144 inquiries, 91 inquiries were on conflicts of interest issues - 65 of these inquiries (i.e., 45 per cent) related to participation in outside activities (such as board membership in not-for-profit organizations, publishing articles, teaching assignments, etc.), 13 inquiries (9 per cent) concerned the receipt of gifts, awards and hospitality, and 13 inquiries (9 per cent) pertained to other potential conflicts of interest situations. The Ethics Office is of the view that this increase -- from 13 inquiries in 2008 to 66 in 2009, and 91 inquiries in 2010 -- is an indicator of the heightened sense of awareness of conflict of interest issues and concerns among staff since the establishment of the Ethics Office.

Figure 1
Requests for ethics advice by issue in 2010


Post-employment
3 (2 per cent)
Conflicts of interest - outside activities
65 (45 per cent)
Employment-related
50 (35 per cent)
Conflicts of interest - gifts, awards & hospitality
13 (9 per cent)
Conflicts of interest - other
13 (9 per cent)

27. Employment-related issues which constituted 35 per cent of the total number of requests for advice and guidance in 2010 ranged from clarification on the provisions of the UNFPA policy on "Harassment, Sexual Harassment and Abuse of Authority" and its application; norms of ethical behaviour in interpersonal relations, particularly in the supervisor/supervisee context; career-related concerns; and performance appraisal issues. It is to be noted that in these types of situations, while the Ethics Office does not replace existing mechanisms for reporting misconduct or resolving grievances, the Ethics Office can assist staff in providing information on relevant policies and procedures and other entities within UNFPA and the United Nations system in order to assist staff to decide on the entity best suited to address their concerns.

Figure 2
Requests for ethics advice: comparison of 2008, 2009 and 2010 data



28. In 2010, of the total number of requests received for ethics advice, 92 requests (64 per cent) were from field staff members and 52 requests (36 per cent) were from headquarters

staff members, including senior management (see figure 3). Furthermore, 80 inquiries (56 per cent) were from female staff members and 64 inquiries (44 per cent) were from male staff members (see figure 4). Regarding the mode of contact with the Ethics Office, 11 inquiries were by telephone, 16 were in-person and 117 were via e-mail.

Figure 3
Requests for ethics advice: breakdown by location

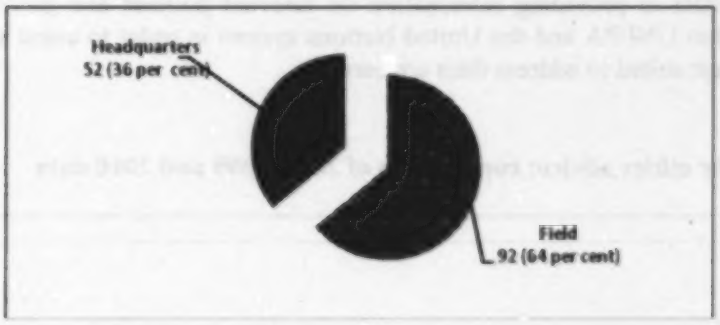
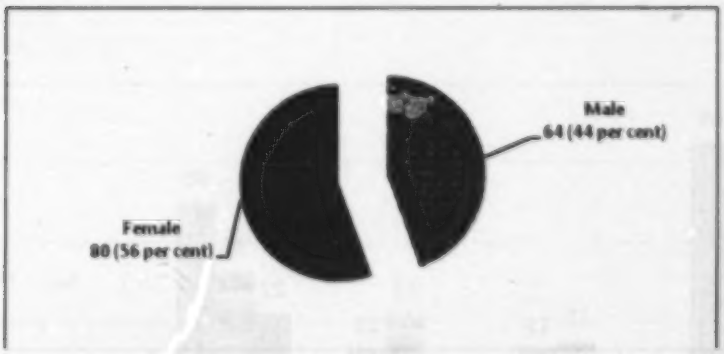


Figure 4
Requests for ethics advice: breakdown by gender



D. Financial disclosure programme

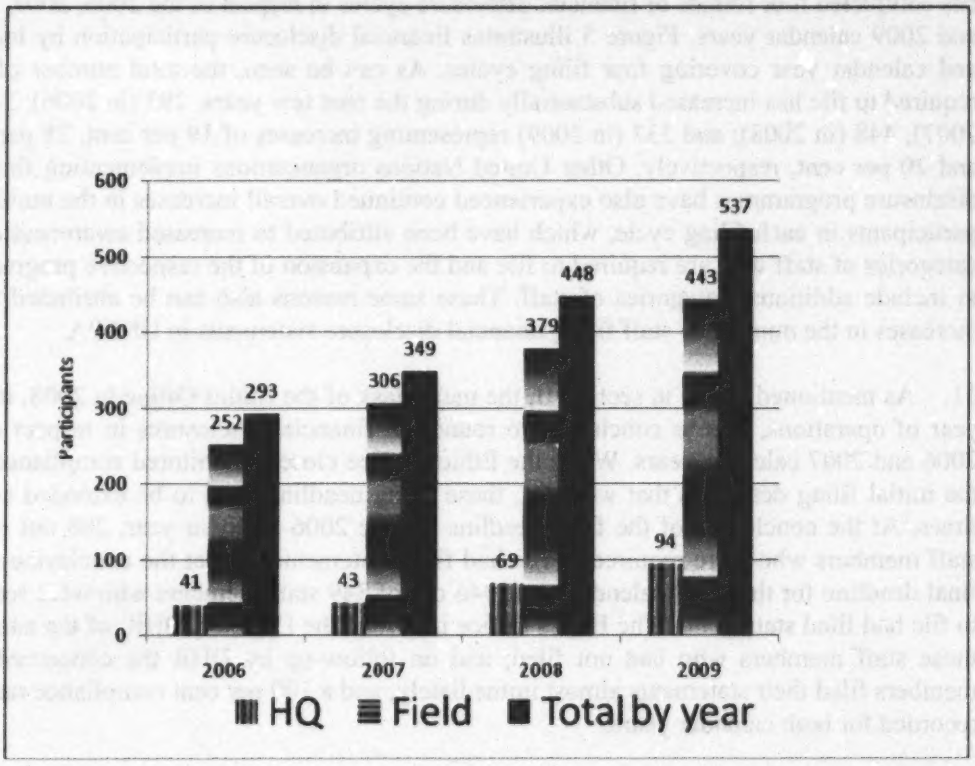
29. The objective of the UNFPA financial disclosure and declaration of interest programme is to preserve and protect the integrity of the organization and the staff who are required to submit disclosures under the related policy, thereby maintaining and enhancing public trust in UNFPA. It is one of the tools for identifying organizational risks in relation to conflict of interest situations arising from the personal financial investments and/or outside activities of staff members and their spouses and dependent children who are covered under the policy.

30. The financial disclosure form is available through a secure UNFPA Intranet reporting facility and all statements are filed electronically. Since its establishment, the Ethics Office has completed four rounds of financial disclosure cycles in respect of the 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 calendar years. Figure 5 illustrates financial disclosure participation by location and calendar year covering four filing cycles. As can be seen, the total number of staff required to file has increased substantially during the past few years: 293 (in 2006); 349 (in 2007); 448 (in 2008); and 537 (in 2009) representing increases of 19 per cent, 28 per cent, and 20 per cent, respectively. Other United Nations organizations implementing financial disclosure programmes have also experienced continued overall increases in the number of participants in each filing cycle, which have been attributed to increased awareness of the categories of staff who are required to file and the expansion of the respective programmes to include additional categories of staff. These same reasons also can be attributed to the increases in the number of staff filing financial disclosure statements in UNFPA.

31. As mentioned above in section II, the major task of the Ethics Office in 2008, its first year of operations, was to conclude two rounds of financial disclosures in respect of the 2006 and 2007 calendar years. While the Ethics Office closely monitored compliance with the initial filing deadlines that were set, these filing deadlines had to be extended several times. At the conclusion of the final deadline for the 2006 calendar year, 288 out of 293 staff members who were required to file had filed statements; and at the conclusion of the final deadline for the 2007 calendar year, 346 out of 349 staff members who were required to file had filed statements. The Ethics Office informed the Director, DHR, of the names of those staff members who had not filed; and on follow-up by DHR the concerned staff members filed their statements almost immediately, and a 100 per cent compliance rate was recorded for both calendar years.

32. The Ethics Office is of the view that increased awareness of the purpose of the financial disclosure policy, and collaboration with UNFPA heads of offices and representatives in the identification and follow-up with those who are required to file had a strong impact on the timely submission of financial disclosure statements in respect of the 2009 and 2010 filing cycles. Despite the increases in the filing populations during these two cycles, all those who were required to file for the 2008 calendar year did so by the end of June 2009, and all those who were required to file for the 2009 calendar year did so by the end of April 2010.

Figure 5
Financial disclosure participation by location and calendar year, 2006-2009



33. All financial disclosure statements are reviewed for completeness of information and for the identification of any organizational risk (financial or otherwise) which could give rise to an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest situation. Where required, concerned staff members are contacted for additional information and/or alerted to a conflict of interest situation, and advised on its resolution. The resolutions offered to a staff member in these instances could include making a formal request and securing authorization for participation in an outside activity, resignation from a particular outside activity, divestment of holdings and/or the staff member recusing himself/herself from specified official responsibilities.

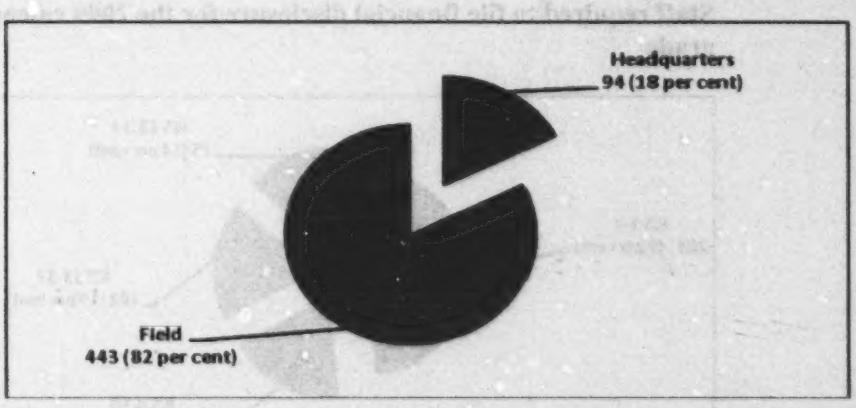
Financial disclosure exercise 2010

34. A total of 537 staff members were required to file financial disclosure statements for the 2009 calendar year (compared to 448 in respect of the 2008 calendar year) and there was 100 per cent compliance. The 20 per cent increase in number in the 2010 filing cycle can be specifically attributed to the inclusion of additional categories of staff with fiduciary

and procurement responsibilities, particularly the increased number of Operations Managers recruited at regional/subregional/country office levels, and the inclusion of Assistant Representatives serving in duty stations covered by a UNFPA Country Director or a regional/subregional office Director. Almost 80 per cent of the statements were submitted to the Ethics Office prior to the 31 March 2010 deadline and the remaining were received by 30 April 2010.

35. As can be seen from figure 6, the majority of staff required to file disclosures are field-based. The total number of 443 staff members from the field (82 per cent), include regional and subregional Directors and Deputy Directors; UNFPA Representatives, Deputy Representatives, and Assistant Representatives serving in duty stations covered by non-resident UNFPA Country Directors; and Operations Managers/Specialists and Finance/Administrative Assistants serving in regional/subregional/country offices.

Figure 6
Total staff required to file financial disclosure for the 2009 calendar year by location



36. Figure 7 presents the breakdown by location of field staff members who are required to file financial disclosure statements. Figure 8 presents the breakdown by International Civil Service (ICS) grade for the 2010 filing cycle as follows: 261 staff members (49 per cent) in the ICS grades 1 to 7; 99 staff members (18 per cent) in the ICS grades 8 to 10; 102 staff members (19 per cent) in the ICS grades 11 to 12; and 75 staff members (14 per cent) in the ICS grades 13 to 14.

Figure 7
Field staff members required to file financial disclosure for the 2009 calendar year by location

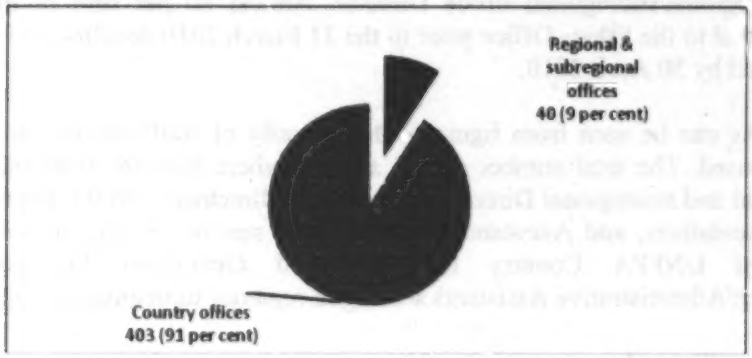
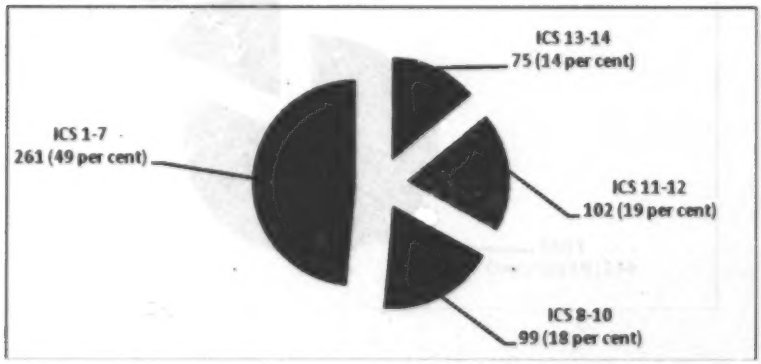


Figure 8
Staff required to file financial disclosure for the 2009 calendar year by grade



E. Protection against retaliation

37. A key function of the Ethics Office is to carry out the responsibilities assigned to it in the protection against retaliation policy in respect of staff who seek protection against retaliation for having engaged in a "protected activity", which is defined as reporting, in good faith, a misconduct or participating in a duly authorized fact-finding activity such as audit, evaluation, investigation, inspection or management review. The policy is intended to preserve the public trust in the organization; to reinforce UNFPA commitment to address misconduct; and to empower staff to speak up against acts of misconduct.

38. When the Ethics Office receives a complaint of retaliation pursuant to the policy, it makes an initial assessment that can lead to a determination that the situation warrants preliminary review or is outside the mandate of the Office, and in the case of the latter the complainant is provided with appropriate advice/referral. If after preliminary review the Ethics Office determines that there is a *prima facie* case of retaliation then the matter is referred to DOS for investigation and the burden of proof shifts to the organization, requiring management to show that it would have taken the same action against the complainant, absent the protected activity.

39. In 2010, the Ethics Office received three requests for protection against retaliation. Of the three, one was outside the mandate of the Ethics Office and the complainant was advised to refer the matter to the appropriate unit. The other two cases related to detrimental actions being recommended against the complainants and in these two instances the Ethics Office made recommendations to the appropriate office for action to be taken to avoid implementation of the detrimental actions. The recommendations of the Ethics Office were accepted and retaliation was prevented in both cases.

IV. United Nations Ethics Committee and Ethics Network

40. The UNFPA Ethics Office actively participated in all eight United Nations Ethics Committee meetings and the two Ethics Network meetings that were held in 2010. UNEC continues to be an excellent forum for the sharing of experiences and learning. Whether it be identifying core ethical standards and concepts for inclusion in organization-specific ethics training, participating in discussions and initiatives to ensure ethics policy harmonization, or brainstorming on the complex issues associated with the receipt and reporting of gifts, the engagement with the Committee has been very useful. Full information on the work of the UNEC and the Ethics Network is provided in the Report of the Secretary-General on the Activities of the Ethics Office (A/65/343) presented at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

V. Conclusion

41. Based on the feedback received by the Ethics Office, face-to-face ethics workshops, using the case-study approach appears to be the most effective methodology to impart ethics training. Incorporating face-to-face ethics training sessions in training events and meetings organized by the LCMB and other organizational units at the regional and headquarters levels is cost effective, ensures wide participation and institutionalizes ethics training. The Ethics Office has used these events and meetings as opportunities to conduct training sessions and will continue to do so. At the same time, in order to promote continuous ethics education, the Ethics Office will work closely with all heads of offices in supporting their initiatives to ensure that ethics and ethical behaviour is an integral part of the work environments of their respective offices.

42. The Ethics Office has provided a safe and secure environment for staff to discuss ethics-related issues in confidence. The increase in the number of requests for advice and guidance is a positive indicator of the willingness on the part of staff to surface and discuss ethics-related concerns and issues. The increase in the number of inquiries, particularly in the category of conflicts of interest, reflects the heightened sense of awareness among staff "to do the right thing" and to ensure that their actions do not compromise the organization in any way. The provision of advice and guidance is a critical risk-management function of the Ethics Office and the Office will continue to build on its communication activities to reinforce its preventive role in managing organizational risk.

43. As mentioned at the outset of this report, the activities of the Ethics Office are linked to and are in consonance with the objectives of the management results framework of the UNFPA strategic plan, 2008-2013. Through the implementation of these activities, the Ethics Office has endeavoured to increase staff awareness of ethical behaviour and to motivate staff and management to observe the highest standards of ethical conduct. Moving forward, the Ethics Office will strengthen its efforts to institutionalize ethics within the organization so that it is fully integrated in organizational initiatives to ensure accountability.